

November 22, 1966 was an anniversary. Not pleasant, like birthdays, not historic, in the sense that victory in World War II was historic. It is an unhappy anniversary, not just because a great man died for no need or good reason on that day, but because, to me, it has come to commemorate ~~the~~ something special. This is the day you asked me to look back on the previous three years and forward to my new book.

This is also the day I could not write a brief article. The words came, the phrases rounded, but the ideas jumbled. Having written the more than a hundred thousand words of WHITEWASH in 28 days, can you imagine how it felt not ~~be~~ to be able to do a thousand in a single night?

In the past seven months I have learned that on this subject I am articulate. I can - and do - talk on it for uninterrupted hours without preparation. Anniversary even, after a long day, I spent almost seven hours, three by transcontinental phone to TV and radio stations (broadcast live). Two hours ased and I could be off ~~the~~ to the printer's. No sweat. But those few words you asked I could not formulate. So I went to bed.

Soon I was awakened by a reporter for the Baltimore Sun who had phoned me several days earlier to learn who had, in fact, drawn the official autopsy chart

if, as he'd heard me say, the one man in the world who could not have is the one to whom all other researchers attributed it, Dr. J.J. Humes.

"Try Dr. J. Thornton Boswell", I suggested, giving him the address.

"What shall I ask him?" the reporter wanted to know.

"Why see him if you do not know?"

"I ~~X~~ now, I mean what else?"

It turned out that this diligent seeker after fact wanted to ask the doctor only if he had placed the mark indicating a bullet wound in the President's back in the correct place, since it was inconsistent with all the other evidence except the unsubstantiated testimony of these doctors alone.

"He's already said that under oath," I said, "What makes news of it now?"

"Do you expect him to say that he was a perjurer before the Commission?"

"All I want to know is did he make a mistake."

"He told you that by phone today. Why bother him more tomorrow?"

Silence.

"Then, I look, you write about the assassination, you worry about the whole thing. All I care about is did he mark the chart right."

"Can he tell you <sup>yes</sup> ~~no~~ Would you know what anything he says means? (it turns out his preparation for the interview consisted of no reading of any of the

book, not any of the testimony, not even the Report. I asked him what good he expected to accomplish, what purpose his story could serve, how he could do anything but make a mess messier. This did not concern him. A story is an end in itself.

The defense of ignorance as a qualification for writing came out in the confession that journalism, as he conceived it, was its own kind of stratified mediocrity that knowledge is not a need of the reader; and that imparting it is not the function of the writer. To illustrate it he told me he had just written about loan shark sharks, knowing no more about what he had written and being no better prepared to inquire into it. From this solid basis in logic he explained that to the people of Baltimore, what he said about loan sharks was more important than anything he could say about the assassination of a president.

Sleeping again was not easy after this. But it helped the pieces fall into place. Here is a young man, beginning his life that he conceives as no contribution to society, insisting that what he does have no meaning or significance, serve no public purpose and worse, insisting that this is right. He illustrates what more than any other single thing has disturbed me for the past three years: the total abdication of the intellectual community at the time of our

society's greatest need for them on the leadership they should provide, the enlightenment that should flow from them, the meaning they should enable us to impart to events, to understanding.

Without conspicuous exception I look back upon three years of shameful intellectual flinkery that in recent months reached a crescendo of dishonor and defecation, dishonor to themselves and their properly exalted stations in our society, and defecation that I have survived and that has helped me accomplish what I seek - for writers should have legitimate, worthwhile goals.

I have learned that it is a fault to research painstakingly, to muster irrefutable fact overwhelmingly - and these are the exact words of some of the very few reviews WHITEWASH got. Until recently it was accorded silence. Now it has earned shanders. To the crime of refusing to knuckle under to some 60 publishers who think an American resident can be murdered and considered consigned to history with the dubious epitaph of a fake inquest, who believe that this can and may happen while leaving unanswered responsible questions that it is within the capacity of men to answer, I have added another crime: WHITEWASH is a success, in both sales and influence. This, perhaps, is my great crime, the real reason the so-called intellectuals berate it and me.

They do it from behind the safe skirts of the whores in their lives,

the literary jehnnals, the book "reviews", the columns and wire-service stories.

They do it as in the dark of night, their faces turned as though in shame ( I think it is fear). Recently I have taken to writing them. Having learned fact is no medicine for their illness I have a new cure. Challenge.

I challenge each and every one- the learned judges who befoul their robes with the defense of illegality and wrong; the editors who in contemplating navels see jewels of wisdom where there is arc excreta. I ask each to debate me in his own medium or any other of his choice, in speech or writing. Not one has accepted.

Most recent is the honored senior of the White House Press Corps, that impressive gentlemen who all along I thought had some contribution to make above his "Thank you, Mr. President", to close the press conferences that have become a ritualized propaganda. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of the assassination yet today is the one man in all the cuntry who does not know price precisely where he was when the President fell. His story is the pinnacle of irresponsibility and error. It thus earned the top spots in the Sunday editorial sections.

I challenged him to debate me before his peers, at the sutitorium of the National Press Club, on his story, my book, the work of the Commission, or any

questions in, for hours at a time. Not a single question has reflected the corrupting influence of these windbags under mortarboards! Not a single, solitary one! What a tribute to the good sense of Everyman, and what a self-indictment of the so-called intellectuals!

This is as it should be - must be. Authority, to be respected, must be ~~both~~ righteous and responsible. *and sound.*

Our society did fall apart when the law allowed Oswald to be murdered, when the lawyers were mute at the public and flagrant denial of his rights - all of them. Each of us lost his rights when Oswald lost his, and had Oswald been the assassin, as the Commission's best evidence proves impossible, each of us would have lost additional rights with his murder, which denied the functioning of justice.

With few ~~many~~ exceptions, the intellectuals have defaulted. Not one of them has undertaken the grim and unhappy task of writing a book about what really happened to the President who sought to restore the intellect to the White House, nor has one worthy of the name undertaken to write ~~fixing~~ with either knowledge, or understanding or maturity and responsibility about what happened in the investigation of the tragedy. That has become the task of the unknowns, the unimportant. Now that we have done it, successfully and effectively, watch the learned vultures swoop in for the spoils!

There is one conspicuous exception, and though he damaged me personally, I must pay tribute to Norman Mailer and the monumental work - it is much more than a review; it is a masterpiece - that he wrote of a later work. *done* His eloquence, his passion, his understanding, his tremendous and prescient feel of the sweep and import of the tragedy, is almost enough to redeem his deficient colleagues. It is a landmark in current letters, and for his great skill and courage we are all in his debt.

Certainly, elsewhere, there must be more Norman Mailers. Certainly now we must hear them, now that it is safe, now that it is respectable, now that they do not have to struggle alone and assail the mighty in loneliness, now that there is an aroused army behind them, *and the effort can be profitable.*

And they must be heard, for the task is not done, the ~~rights~~ wrongs not righted, the national honor ~~not~~ yet redeemed. Let them look back to the firing of the Reichstag and let their hearts, not matter how ~~important~~, *fairly* be heard.

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that if they curse it long enough, wish it hard enough, and cast enough dead

cents around their heads <sup>vehemently</sup> passionately enough, the horrible truth they cannot face

will somehow go away.

combination of his choosing. He declined on the ground of unfamiliarity with the public platform. So I challenged him to debate in his Pulitzer Prize field, writing, in any journal he selected, offering to let him tie my right hand behind my back; I'd write a factual criticism of his so-called article-review and give it to him in advance so he could use his space for the last-word answer. ~~XXXX~~ He will not cost the dice <sup>even this battle.</sup> ~~when they are loaded his way.~~

This is not to say that I am so much. Rather he says how little he is.

There is no trick to public speaking, I have learned after a lifetime of no need for it. One need but have something to say and the conviction it must be said. The rest comes. Truth is, indeed, a shield, and it turns the evil word, spoken or written, from the forked tongue.

Why, then, do the judges, the eminent professors, the wealthiest of the famous lawyers, the philosophers (warranted by degree if not performance), the editors, the publicists, the historians, the columnists and even the professors vie in a mad dash between Canute's beach and the fitting room of the Emperor's clothes? How can they be so insensitive they do not feel the wet water of truth washing their feet, or <sup>so</sup> oblivious <sup>of</sup> all reality it takes a man of no importance, a figurative little boy, to tell them how naked they are, and how ugly in their nakedness.

How far they are separated from the ordinary people, the wonderful people of our country and its greatness, those who work and sweat and face reality and seek truth! They speak to each other alone, and they do each other no good. They have no learning or knowledge to impart and they accept none.

Never have I seen such complete bankruptcy as in the concerted effort to pretend, as do these literary and legal embodiments of all three fabled monkeys, <sup>(insert)</sup> display. They invent fiction and call it fact, quote each other in print, and reach nobody. They neither see nor feel nor hear what the everyday working man understands instinctively. With apologies to Dr. Johnson, they do smell.

Millions of people have heard me over radio and TV. Thousands have phoned